

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON AWARENESS OF AGEISM

Draft Report

October 2024



ILC
International Longevity Centre Canada
Centre international sur la longévité du Canada

Canadian Coalition Against Ageism
Coalition canadienne anti-âgisme

Human Rights do not have a best before date
Support a U.N. Convention on the Rights of Older Persons



Contents

1

Introduction

2

**Executive
Summary**

3

Detailed Findings

- Understanding ageism
- Definition of ageism
- Perceived prevalence of ageism
- Agreement to ageism statements

4

Demographics

INTRODUCTION

Background and Objectives

Background

Ageism is a significant societal issue in Canada, affecting many older adults. It manifests as stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination based on age. This can lead to various negative consequences, including reduced lifespan, financial insecurity, poorer health outcomes, and diminished self-esteem.

The World Health Organization's [Global Report on Ageism](#) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and combating this issue, outlining its impact, effective strategies, and future research directions.

Addressing ageism requires a multifaceted approach involving education, policy changes, and a shift in societal attitudes. As Canada's population ages, tackling ageism becomes increasingly crucial for ensuring the well-being and inclusion of older adults.

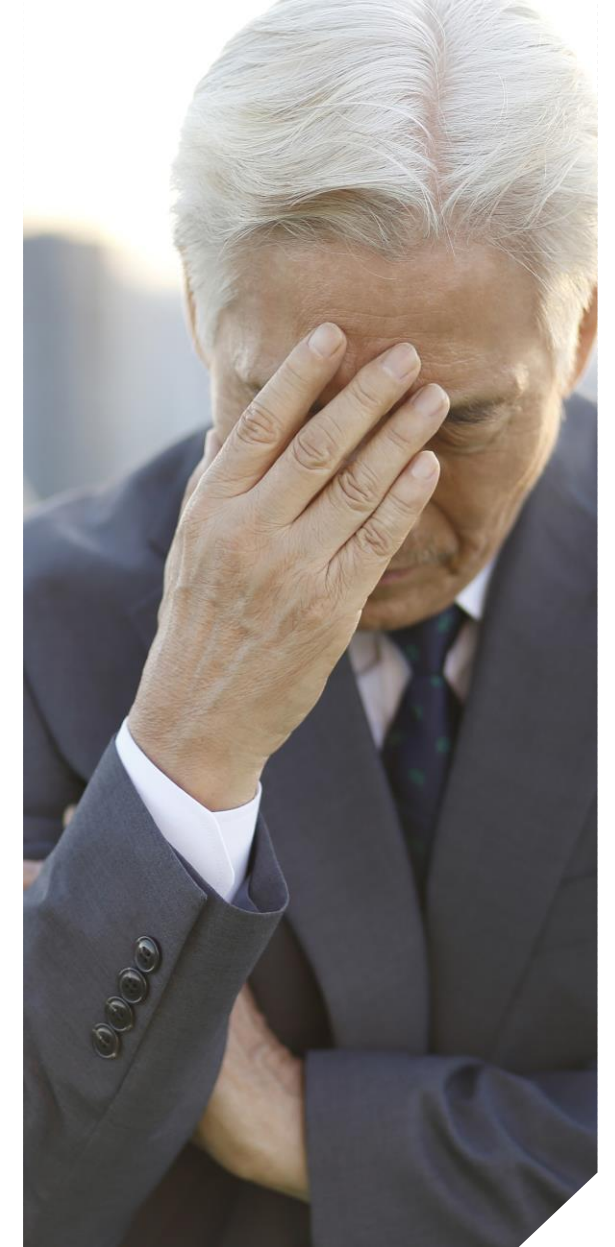
Objectives

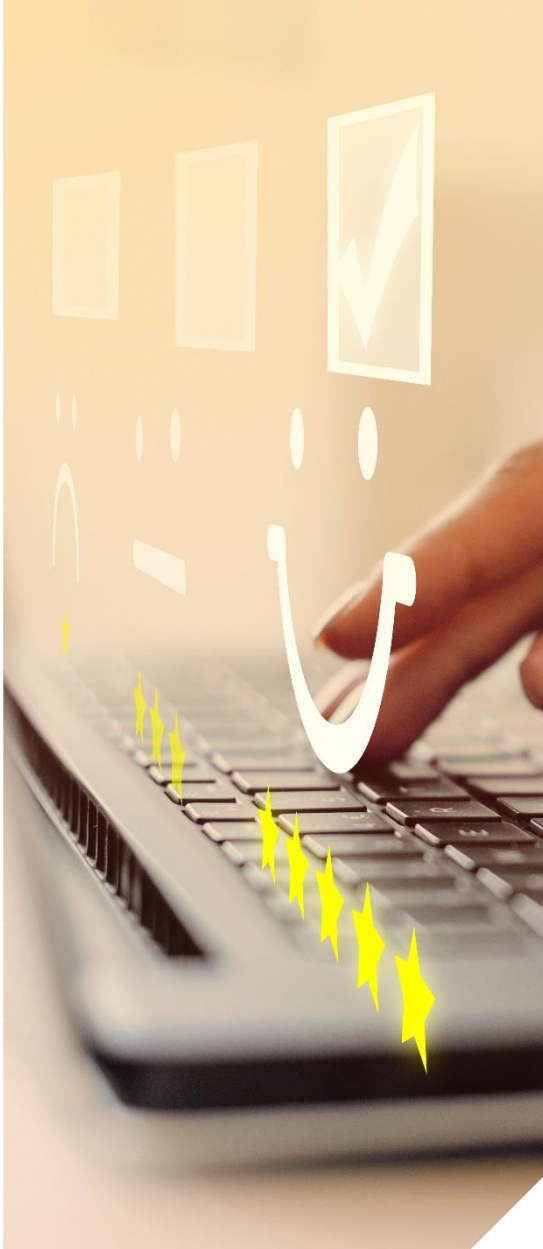
The main objective of the survey is to gauge the public's awareness of issues related to ageism.

This research aims to establish a baseline among Canadians on behalf of the Canadian Coalition Against Ageism.

Specifically, this research will:

- Provide a baseline of public's awareness of the prevalence and pervasiveness of issues related to ageism – with a special focus on older Canadians
- Understand the gaps in awareness to inform a potential education campaign.





Survey Methodology

A representative national sample of n=1000 Canadians aged 25+ have been surveyed online in both English and French.

A representative sample ensures that the research findings are reflective of the opinions of Canadian residents.

Quotas and weighting were used to ensure the sample was representative of the surveyed population by:

- Age
- Gender
- Region

Sampling quotas and weighting were designed to match the latest Statistics Canada Census figures (2021).

The survey was fielded between September 25th and September 30th, 2024.

The accuracy of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a credibility interval, a measure similar to a margin of error.

For this survey, the overall sample is considered accurate to within +/- 3.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadian residents aged 25 and older been surveyed.

Smaller subsets of the population will have larger credibility intervals. Where totals do not add to 100% it is due to rounding or because respondents being permitted to give more than one response to a question.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary (1)

- **Canadians have a varied understanding of ageism.**

While many understand the basic concept, there's a significant portion, especially among older adults, who don't fully grasp its meaning or prevalence. This highlights a critical need for education.

- **Underestimation of ageism's pervasiveness:**

Canadians significantly underestimate how widespread ageist attitudes are. This

misperception can hinder efforts to combat ageism, as people may not recognize it as a serious problem requiring attention.

- **Some awareness of the impact on health and well-being:**

The survey confirms the negative impact of ageism on mental and physical health, reinforcing the urgency of addressing this issue. The anxiety expressed by many Canadians about their own

aging process underscores the need for positive messaging and support.

- **Much less awareness of the impact of ageism on the economy:**

Less than half of Canadians agree that ageism has a major negative impact on the economy highlighting a potential gap in understanding that may require attention.



Executive Summary (2)

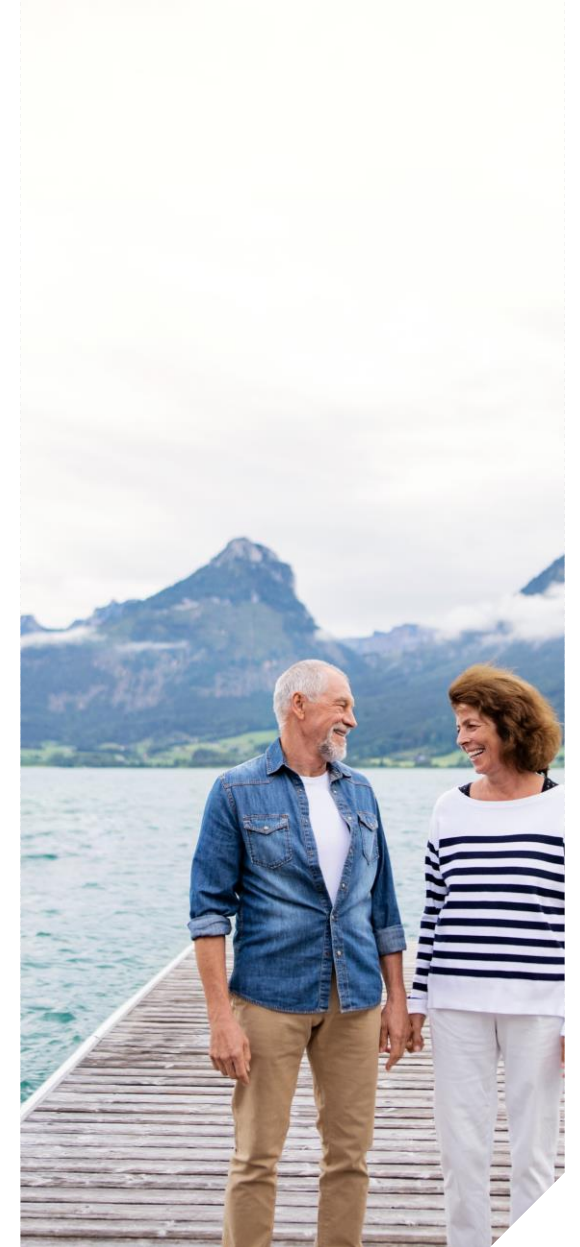
Ageism affects everyone, either directly or indirectly. For older adults, it can lead to social isolation, diminished quality of life, and poorer health outcomes. For younger Canadians, ageism perpetuates harmful stereotypes that can influence their behavior and attitudes towards older adults.

While more than half of Canadians agree that ageism

is common in Canada, only one-quarter admit to having personally engaging in ageist behaviour, suggesting either a reluctance to admit engaging in ageism or a gap in self-awareness of age-related biases or micro-aggressions.

While the proportion of Canadians who indicate being often unfairly treated or excluded by other people because of their age is

similar across all age groups, younger people are more likely to admit they have engaged in ageist behaviour.



Key Figures

54%

...report a good understanding of ageism

And 2 in 10 (17%) admit to not understanding it at all.

Younger Canadians demonstrate a better understanding than older Canadians, and more Quebec residents indicate an understanding compared with those in Alberta or Atlantic Canada.

62%

...can identify the correct definition of ageism

Older adults (55+) are more likely to identify the correct definition than younger age groups. Those reporting a good understanding of ageism are significantly more likely to define it correctly.

13%

... is the average guess of the prevalence of ageist attitudes towards older people

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates it at 1 in 2. Women are directionally more likely to guess levels closer to the WHO estimate.

55%

...agree that ageism is common in Canada

But more (64%) agree that age discrimination negatively impacts mental and/or physical health, suggesting education is needed more so around actual prevalence than the negative impacts of ageism.

42%

... report anxiety about their own ageing

And 31% have felt negatively about themselves due to aging, Feeling negatively about their personal ageing process resonates most commonly among those aged 35-54.

Conclusion and Next Steps



Promote Positive Aging

Develop initiatives that promote positive images of aging and challenge negative stereotypes. Encourage intergenerational programs and activities to foster understanding and respect between different age groups.



Addressing Misperceptions

Promoting interventions to correct the underestimation of ageism's prevalence. Presenting clear data and evidence to demonstrate the extent of the problem and its consequences.



Targeted Educational Campaigns

Developing tailored campaigns to address the identified knowledge gaps. With the goal on educating both younger and older Canadians about the various forms of ageism, its impact, and how to combat it. Specifically targeting those who demonstrated a lack of understanding or underestimated the prevalence of ageism



Policy Recommendations

Using the survey findings to advocate for policy changes that protect older adults from discrimination and promote their inclusion in all aspects of society. This includes addressing ageism in the workplace, healthcare, and social services.



Further Research

Expanding research efforts to explore the intersection of ageism with other forms of discrimination, particularly among marginalized groups. Investigating the specific experiences of older women, immigrants, racialized persons, and Indigenous communities.

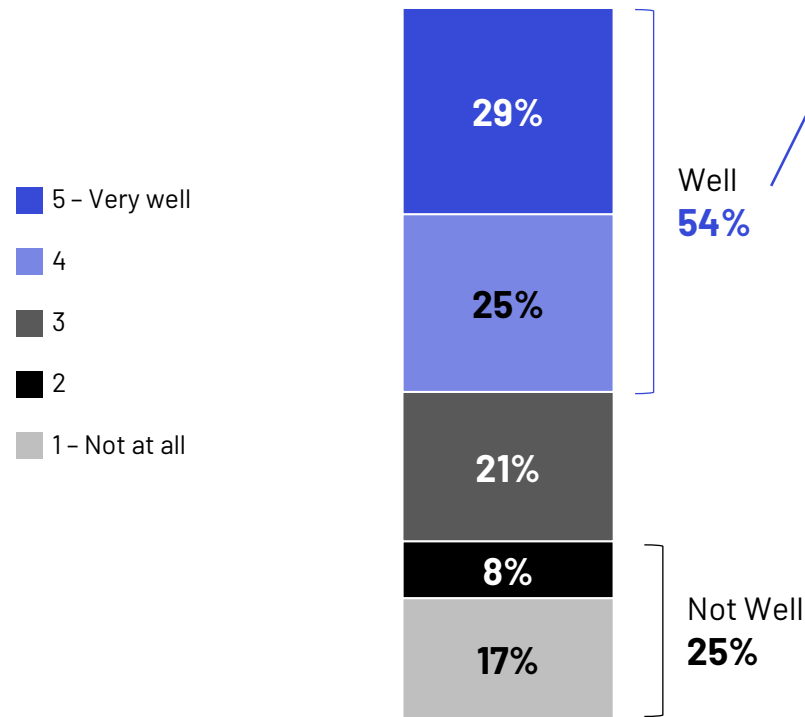
UNDERSTANDING AGEISM



Just over half (54%) of Canadians say they understand what the word ageism means 'well' (rated 4 or 5 out of a 5 pt scale). Two in ten (17%) admit they don't understand what the word means 'at all' (1 out of a 5 pt scale).

Younger Canadians are significantly more likely to rate their understanding of the word ageism as 'well' compared to older Canadians.

Canadians living in Quebec are also significantly more likely to believe they understand the word ageism 'well' compared to those living in Alberta or Atlantic Canada.



Male	Female	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
55%	52%	59%	58%	51%	55%	45%	51%

BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
51%	46%	54%	53%	60%	47%

HH Income			
Under \$40K	\$40-<\$60k	\$60-<100K	\$100K+
44%	44%	58%	63%

Description of Ageism	
Correct	Incorrect
64%	36%

Prevalence of Ageism	
Correct	Incorrect
64%	52%

Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you understand what the word ageism means?

Indicates % is statistically higher than several other sub-groups (highlights are chosen subjectively)



DEFINITION OF AGEISM



Ageism is a form of stereotyping (how we think), prejudice (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) based on someone's age.

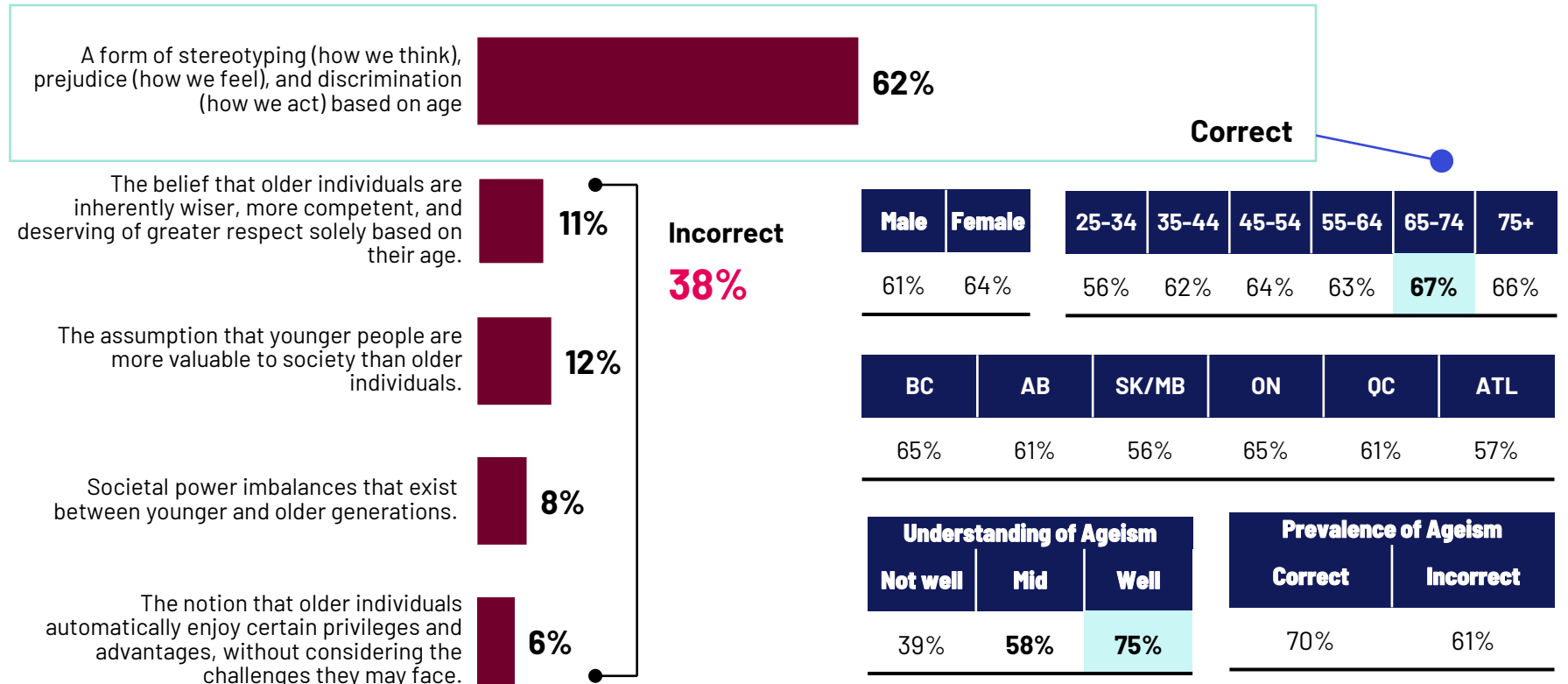


When given a list of possible definitions of ageism, 62% correctly identified it as 'a form of stereotyping (how we think), prejudice (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) based on age'.

A large portion of Canadians understands the best description of what ageism is.

Respondents aged 55+ are significantly more likely to correctly guess the definition (65%) compared to those aged 25-34 (56%).

Those who rate their understanding of the word ageism as 'well' are significantly more likely to guess the correct definition of ageism (75%) compared to those who are 'not well'-versed in the topic (39%).



Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q2. Which of the following would you say best describes what ageism is? (select one only)

Indicates % is statistically higher than several other sub-groups (highlights are chosen subjectively)

PERCEIVED PREVALENCE OF AGEISM





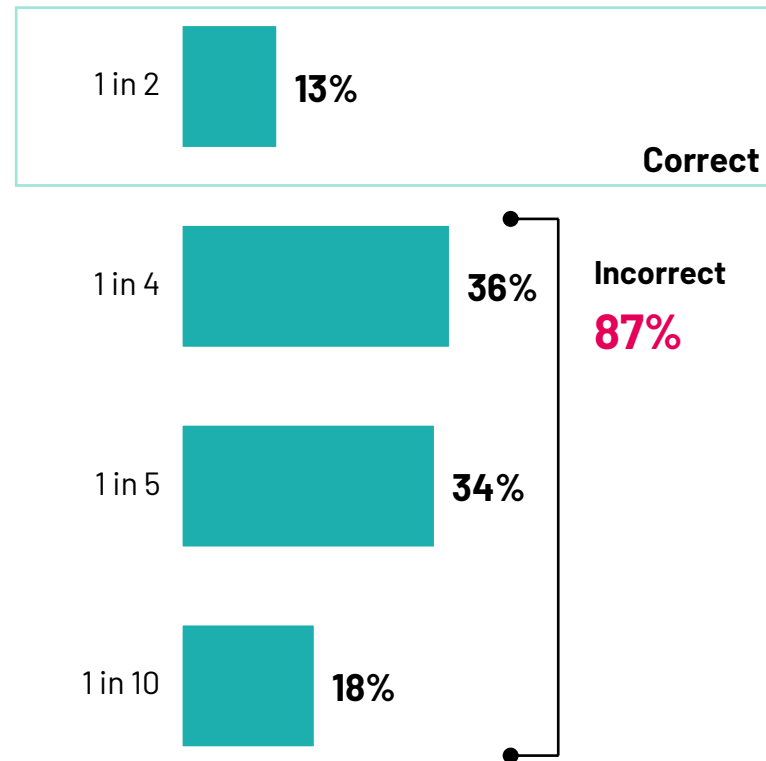
**According to the World
Health Organization**

1 in 2 people have
**ageist attitudes
towards older people.**

Canadians significantly underestimate the proportion of people who have ageist attitudes toward older people. According to the WHO it is 1 in 2 – on average Canadians guess closer to 1 in 10.

The most common response was '1 in 4' (36%) and '1 in 5' (34%). This signals that most Canadians feel that the proportion of people who have ageist attitudes are significantly smaller than the true proportion at 50%.

Women are significantly more likely to correctly guess the true proportion of people who have ageist attitudes towards older people (15%) compared to men (10%).



Male	Female	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
10%	15%	12%	14%	15%	17%	9%	5%

BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
10%	13%	11%	12%	16%	10%

Understanding of Ageism		
Not well	Mid	Well
10%	10%	15%

Description of Ageism	
Correct	Incorrect
14%	10%

Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q3. What proportion of people do you think have ageist attitudes towards older people?

■ Indicates % is statistically higher than several other sub-groups (highlights are chosen subjectively)

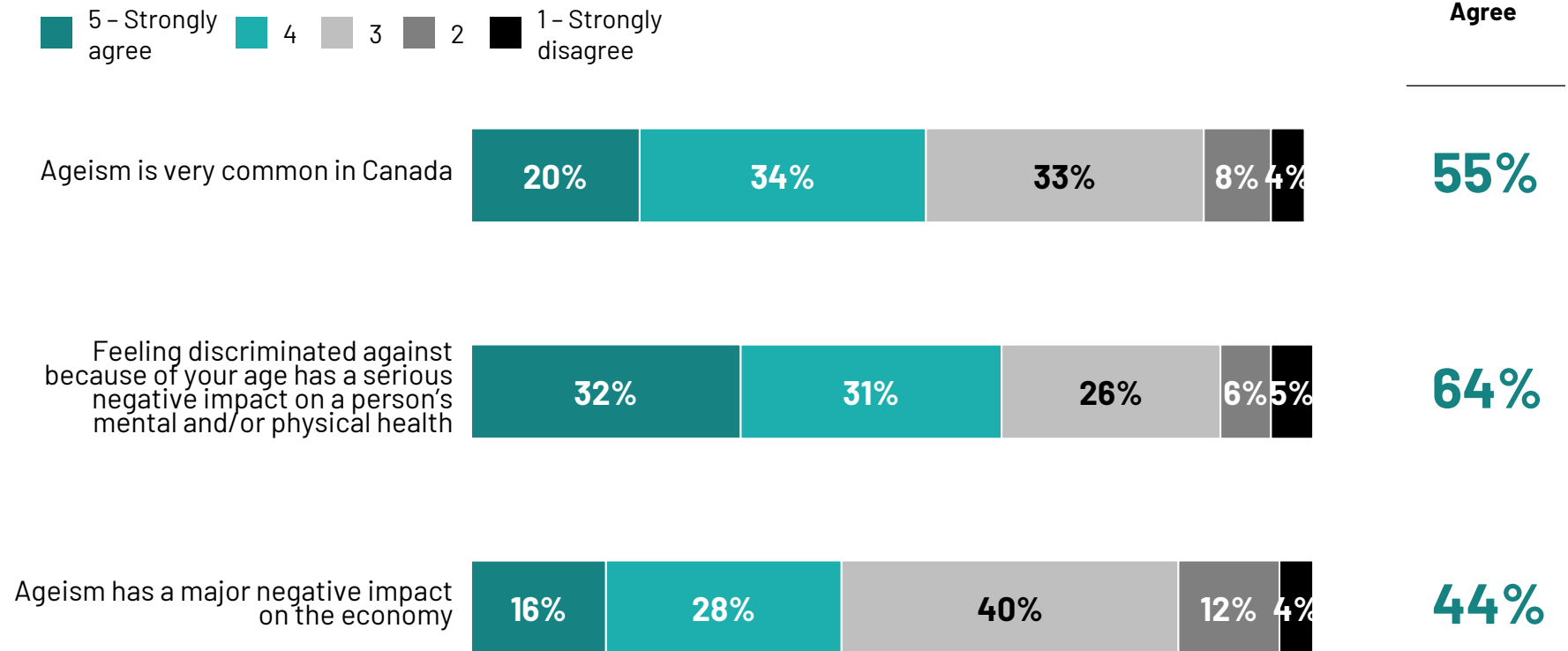
AGREEMENT TO AGEISM STATEMENTS



Over half (55%) of Canadians agree that ageism is very common in Canada, only 12% disagree and 1 in 3 are unsure.

64% agree that feeling discriminated against because of your age has a serious negative impact on a person's mental and/or physical health. Almost a third 'strongly agree' to this sentiment.

Just over 4 in 10 (44%) of Canadians aged 25+ agree that ageism has a major negative impact on the economy, while 40% gave a rating mid rating (3 on a 5 pt scale).



Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

Women, those who correctly guessed the prevalence of ageist attitudes and those who self-describe their knowledge of the word ageism as 'well' are more likely to agree to the statements.

Total Agree (T2B)	Total	Gender		Age						Region						Understanding of ageism			Best description		Prevalence	
		Male	Female	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	Not well	Mid	Well	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
Feeling discriminated against because of your age has a serious negative impact on a person's mental and/or physical health	64%	59%	68%	62%	62%	65%	67%	63%	64%	61%	68%	63%	66%	59%	69%	55%	53%	72%	66%	60%	74%	62%
Ageism is very common in Canada	55%	52%	58%	56%	54%	55%	56%	56%	47%	51%	55%	57%	55%	58%	50%	41%	44%	65%	57%	50%	77%	52%
Ageism has a major negative impact on the economy	44%	39%	49%	42%	42%	46%	48%	44%	42%	49%	35%	43%	43%	48%	46%	32%	39%	52%	48%	38%	53%	43%

Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

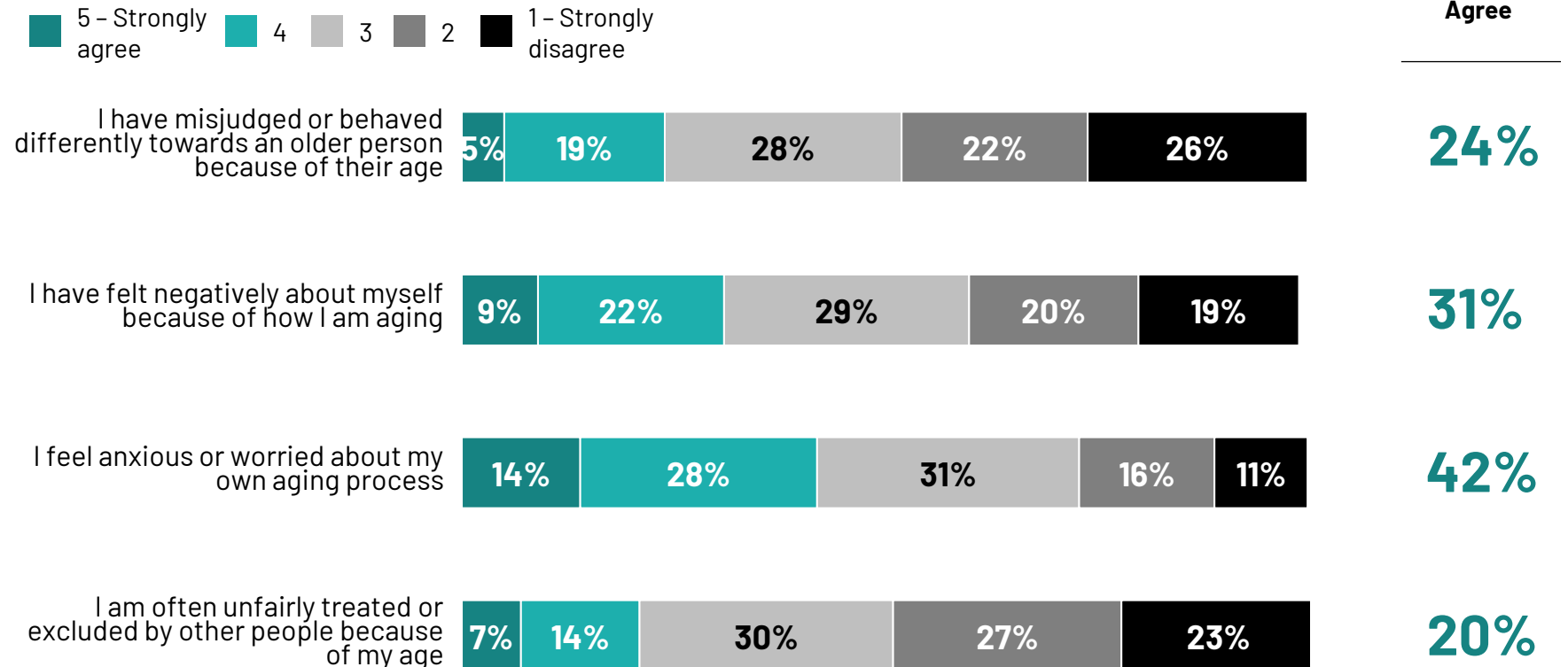
■ Indicates % is statistically higher than several other sub-groups (highlights are chosen subjectively)

42% of Canadians agree to the sentiment “I feel anxious or worried about my own aging process”.

Just under half (47%) disagree that they have misjudged or behaved differently towards an older person because of their age, although 24% somewhat or strongly agree with this statement.

Just under a third (31%) have felt negatively about themselves because of how they are aging.

Half of respondents (50%) disagree with the statement “I am often unfairly treated or excluded by other people because of my age”.



Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

Younger Canadians are significantly more likely to say they have misjudged or behaved differently towards an older person because of their age. Feeling negatively about their personal ageing process resonates most commonly among those aged 35-54.

Total Agree (T2B)	Total	Gender		Age						Region						Understanding of ageism			Best description		Prevalence	
		Male	Female	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	Not well	Mid	Well	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
I feel anxious or worried about my own aging process	42%	40%	44%	42%	46%	42%	45%	37%	35%	39%	36%	37%	46%	42%	40%	38%	33%	47%	43%	41%	59%	39%
I have felt negatively about myself because of how I am aging	31%	30%	32%	29%	34%	40%	29%	27%	27%	28%	28%	23%	36%	31%	27%	29%	21%	36%	32%	29%	49%	29%
I have misjudged or behaved differently towards an older person because of their age	24%	27%	22%	35%	31%	33%	16%	15%	7%	24%	25%	27%	24%	24%	26%	22%	14%	30%	25%	24%	39%	22%
I am often unfairly treated or excluded by other people because of my age	20%	19%	21%	20%	21%	20%	22%	21%	16%	21%	12%	23%	22%	20%	23%	21%	14%	22%	17%	26%	35%	18%

Base: All respondents (n=1000)
Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

DEMOGRAPHICS



Demographics (1/2)



GENDER



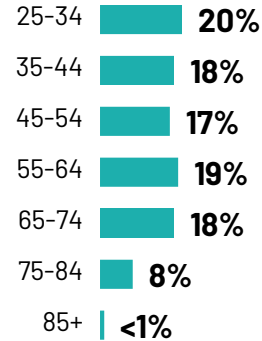
48%
Man



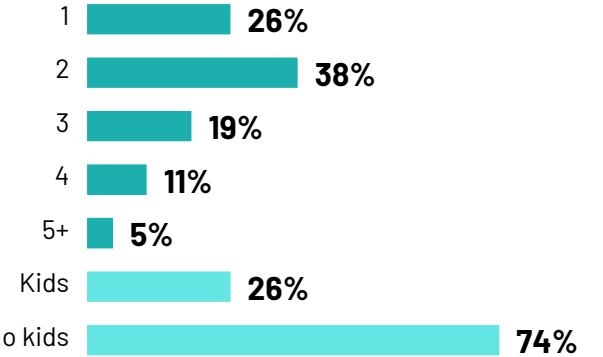
52%
Woman



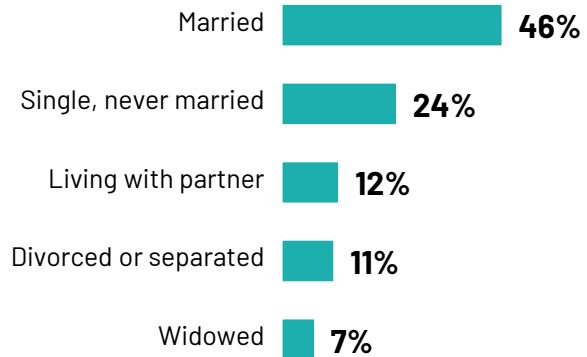
AGE



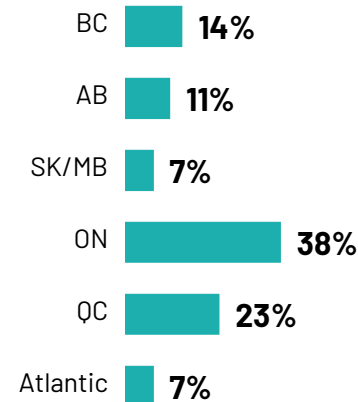
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



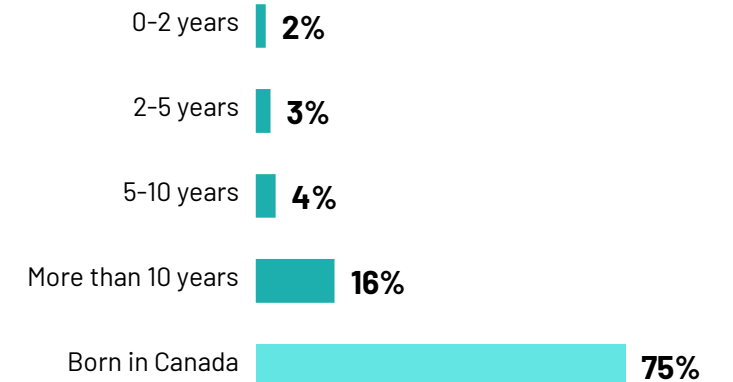
MARITAL STATUS



REGION



LENGTH OF TIME IN CANADA

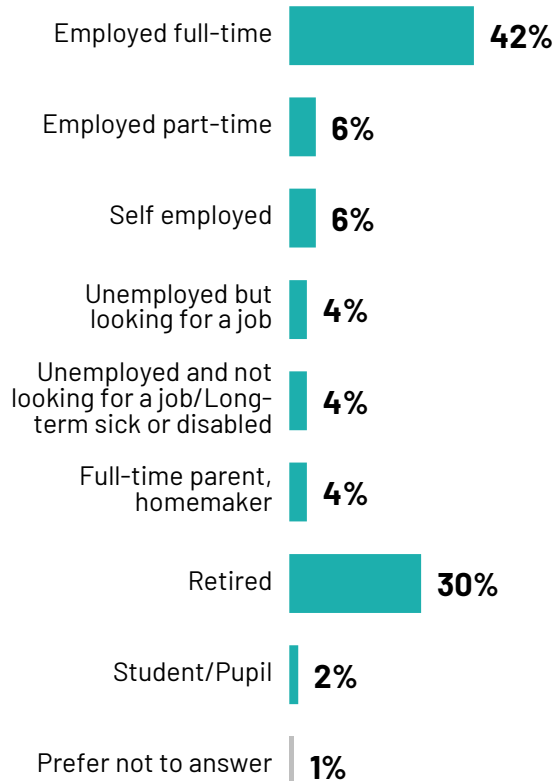


Base: All respondents (n=1000)

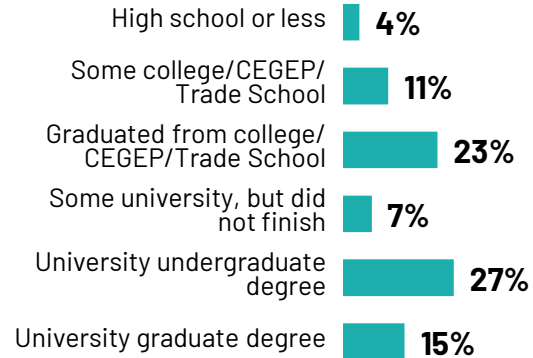
Demographics (2/2)



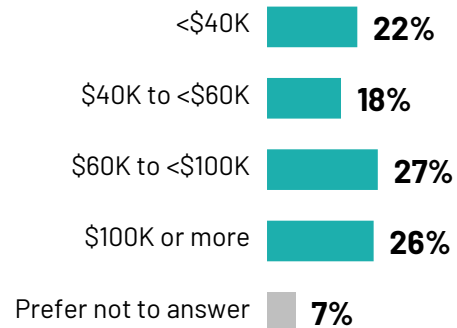
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



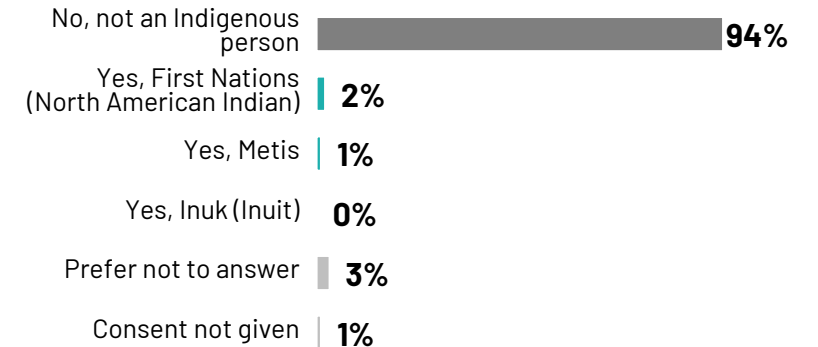
EDUCATION



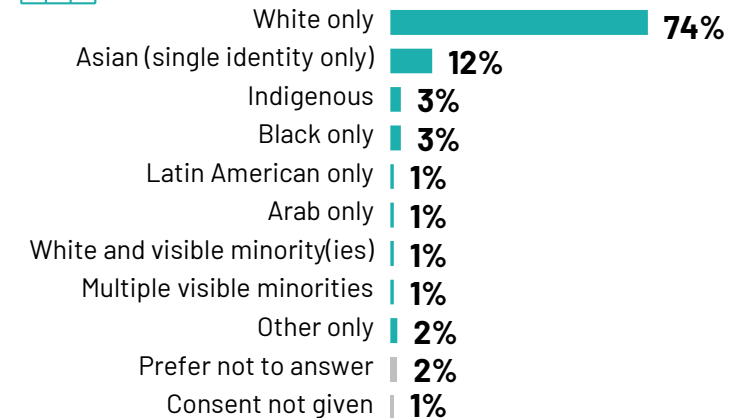
HOUSEHOLD INCOME



INDIGENOUS STATUS



ETHNICITY



Base: All respondents (n=1000)

THANK YOU

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